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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [BO](#)  
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF NEW LIFE CHURCH POSTPONED AGAIN

REF: A. 06 MINSK 1143

[B](#). 06 MINSK 1119  
[C](#). 06 MINSK 1174

Classified By: Ambassador Karen Stewart for reason 1.4 (d).

[1](#). (U) On February 26, members of the Protestant-based New Life Church (NLC) began a week-long hunger strike following another postponement of its appeal to overturn a lower court's decision to strip the church of its property (ref A). (Note: In October 2006, more than 100 NLC members went on hunger strike for 23 days until Belarusian Supreme Economic Court Chairman Viktor Kamenkov agreed to review the case (ref B). End note.) On January 23, Judge Yelena Korotkevich of the Supreme Economic Court postponed NLC's hearing because Minsk city authorities failed to specify the documents that religious communities must provide with their application for building construction. On February 20, Korotkevich again postponed proceedings, ostensibly because Minsk Executive Committee representative Igor Kasperovich could not attend.

[2](#). (C) On February 27, NLC Pastor Vyacheslav Goncharenko told Poloff that NLC does not know the date of the next hearing and attributed the delays to the judge's reticence about issuing a final ruling. He explained that the regime would regard a decision favorable to NLC as a concession to all advocates of religious freedom and other opposition and civil society activists. Although NLC does not expect a judgment against the authorities, Goncharenko confirmed that several NLC members are fasting as part of their prayers for such a decision. Goncharenko observed that NLC continues to receive significant moral support from Protestant, Catholic, and Belarusian Orthodox churches and reiterated his thanks to Ambassador for her support and visit to NLC (ref C).  
Stewart